DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 425 215 UD 032 626

AUTHOR Clooney, MaryAnn
TITLE Reversing Underachievement through the Strengthening of the Teacher-Student-Parent Liaison.
PUB DATE 1998-05-00
NOTE 101p.; Master's Action Research Project, Saint Xavier University and IRI/Skylight.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Family Involvement; German; *High School Students; High Schools; Intervention; Labeling (of Persons); Low Achievement; *Parent Participation; Parent School Relationship; *Performance Contracts; *Student Attitudes; Student Motivation; Suburban Schools; Tables (Data); Teaching Methods; *Underachievement

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for decreasing student underachievement. The targeted population consisted of two German classes at the third- and fourth-year levels in a high school in a suburb of a major metropolitan area. Persistent student underachievement was documented through homework percentages, participation percentages, overall grades, teacher anecdotal accounts, and student surveys completed by 37 German students. Analysis of probable cause suggested that underachievement could be attributed to a mismatch of student learning styles and teaching strategies, the students' negative relationship to learning in the past, and insufficient parental support and involvement in student learning. An examination of the problem setting, combined with a review of solution strategies recommended by knowledgeable others, resulted in the selection of a three-pronged intervention to strengthen the link between the teacher, students, and parents. The three strategies implemented were: (1) an increased variety of teaching methods; (2) student goal-setting contracts; and (3) a home-school liaison. Postintervention data indicate a decrease in motivation to complete homework assignments and participation. The data also indicate, however, student favor toward varied instruction and assessment methods. The individual goal-setting contracts and home-school liaisons provided valuable insights but yielded negative results due, in part, to labeling effects. Ten appendixes contain surveys, consent forms, lesson plans, the achievement contract, and other documents used in the study. (Contains 9 tables and 25 references.) (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 425 215

REVERSING UNDERACHIEVEMENT THROUGH THE STRENGTHENING OF THE TEACHER-STUDENT-PARENT LIAISON

MaryAnn Clooney

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

Field-Based Masters Program

Chicago, Illinois

May, 1998

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mary A. Clooney

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

UD032626

SIGNATURE PAGE

This project was approved by

Advisor

Advisor

Dean, School of Education

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for decreasing student underachievement. The targeted population consisted of two German classes at the third and fourth year levels in a high school setting of a suburban community. The school is located in a suburb of a major metropolitan area. Persistent student underachievement was documented through homework percentages, participation percentages, overall grades, teacher anecdotal accounts, and student surveys.

Analysis of probable cause suggested that underachievement could be attributed to a mismatch of student learning styles and teaching strategies, the student's negative relationship to learning in the past, and insufficient parental support and involvement in student learning.

An examination of the problem setting, combined with a review of solution strategies recommended by knowledgeable others resulted in the selection of a three-pronged intervention to strengthen the link between the teacher, student, and parents. More specifically, an increased variety of teaching methods, student goal setting contracts, and a home-school liaison were implemented.

Post intervention data indicated a decrease in motivation to complete homework assignments and participation. The data, however, indicated student favor toward varied instruction and assessment methods. The individual goal setting contracts, and home-school liaisons provided valuable insights but yielded negative results due, in part, to labeling effects.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT 1

General Statement of the Problem 1

Immediate Problem Context 1

Surrounding Community 4

National Context of Problem 5

CHAPTER 2 - PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION 10

Problem Evidence 10

Probable Causes 14

CHAPTER 3 - THE SOLUTION STRATEGY 28

Review of the Literature 28

Project Objectives 40

Project Processes 40

Action Plan 41

Methods of Assessment 48

CHAPTER 4 - PROJECT RESULTS 49

Historical Description of the Intervention 49

Presentation and Analysis of Results 55

Conclusions and Recommendations 59

REFERENCES 63

APPENDIX

A GERMAN EVALUATION SURVEY 65

B STUDENT WORK SURVEY 68

C PARENT LETTER OF EXPLANATION 71

D STUDENT INTEREST SURVEY 73

E SAMPLE MULTIPLE INTELLINGENCE LESSON PLAN 76

F SAMPLE COOPERATIVE LEARNING LESSON PLAN 80

G SAMPLE ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT LESSON PLAN 84

H ACHIEVEMENT CONTRACT 88

I STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT 91

J STUDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY 93

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade classes exhibit low levels of achievement that conflict with assessments indicating high capabilities. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes teacher observations that document homework percentages, levels of participation, academic growth in terms of past records, as well as assessments that indicate student academic performance. Documentation of the dilemma also includes teacher anecdotal accounts and student surveys.

Immediate Problem Context

The site is a medium-sized High School district serving grades 9 through 12. The site is located in the northeastern part of a midwestern state and is within three miles of another state's border. It is centrally located between two major metropolitan areas. The High School district serves students from three surrounding communities within 54 square miles with a total population of 18,118. Tables 1 displays a predominately white middle class student population of 1,783. Table 2 displays the percentage of Low-Income, English Proficient and Dropout Students, which are all below state averages. Table 3 presents attendance rates, and average class size which is slightly worse than that of the state, but a lower percentage of chronic truancy.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background and Total Enrollment (September 30, 1994)

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Total Enrollment
Site	97.0%	0.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1,783
State	64.7%	20.6%	11.6%	3.0%	1,880,376

Table 2

Low-Income, Limited English-Proficient Students and Dropouts (October 23, 1995)

	Low-Income	Limited-English-Proficient	Dropouts
Site	2.4%	0.1%	3.7%
State	34.0%	5.6%	6.8%

Table 3

Attendance, Chronic Truancy and Average Class Size (October 23, 1995)

	Attendance	Chronic Truancy	Average Class Size
Site	93.0%	1.9%	20.8
State	93.4%	2.4%	19.7

The certified teaching staff at the High School also represents a predominately white population (See Table 4). The teaching staff at this site is more experienced and educated than the state average, but has a higher pupil-teacher ratio (See Table 5). Although the average teacher salary is higher than the state average, it is lower than the average for medium-size High School districts. The operating expenditure per pupil is also considerably lower than the average for medium-size High School districts (See Table 6).

Table 4

Teacher by Racial/Ethnic Background and Gender

	White	Black	Male	Female	Total Number
Site	99.0%	1.0%	48.2%	51.8%	96
State	84.6%	12.0%	25.5%	74.5%	108,557

Table 5

Teacher Characteristics

	Average Teaching Experience	Teachers with Bachelor's Degree	Teachers with Master's Degree	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
Site	15.3 Yrs.	37.4%	62.6%	21.1:1
Type	15.8 Yrs.	33.8%	66.2%	18.0:1
State	14.2 Yrs.	56.0%	43.8%	18.2:1

Table 6

Average Financial Indicators

	Teacher Salary 1994-95	Operating Expenditure Per Pupil 1993-94
Site	$46,279	$5,851
Type	$47,038	$7,078
State	$39,505	$5,705

The school itself is a two story brick building consisting of an older section (83 years old) and a newer section (27 years old). The current administration is in the process of updating the school in terms of its technology. The vision of the

administration is to bring the school up to speed technologically to prepare its students for life beyond the high school setting. The site installed a language lab facility in the fall of 1997 equipped with 16 computer terminals. Plans are in order to increase the number of computers to 30. In addition to various word processing software, the computers are equipped with software enabling students to perform voice recording activities, use the INTERNET, and electronic mail services. By the fall of 1998, CD-ROMS are expected to be available to supplement the textbook series. The site has also recently appropriated sizable funds (specific information regarding these funds has not been released) for extensive renovations to the building.

The site has been conducting a self-study for the 1996-97 school year to prepare itself for a review by the North Central Association during the 1997-98 school year. The teachers and the administration have been reviewing and rewriting goals, expectations, and methods of assessment.

The parents of the students at this site give support through extra curricular activities, a booster club, and volunteer programs. Many parents have also volunteered their time to further the cause of passing referendums for educational funds.

Surrounding Community

This site is located in a northern suburb 65 miles northwest of a major metropolitan area in the mid-west. There are five public elementary schools and four private schools that feed into the site. The three communities served by this site are primarily residential, and the schools are financed principally through property taxes. The communities are largely comprised of a white middle class population, as is shown in

Table 7.

Table 7

Community by Population, Racial/Ethnic Background, and Mean Income

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Total Population	Mean Income
Community A	98.2%	0.4%	1.1%	0.0%	2,855	$46,782
Community B	96.9%	0.8%	2.4%	1.8%	9,163	N/A
Community C	98.3%	0.2%	1.5%	0.1%	6,100	$40,367

In the past, the communities have been divided on the issue of passing a referendum. The parents have repeatedly supported efforts to pass the referendums, but have faced strong opposition from local groups. These local groups have banded together and managed to defeat referendums for educational funds for the last 23 years. Members from communities A and B have tried in the past to gain support for the proposal of a new referendum which would create a separate unit district.

National Context of the Problem

Will students of the United States of America be prepared for the next century? It is a question that should concern every American. "Today, people who know more earn more. And they are less likely to be unemployed" (Olson, 1997, p. 7). Schools throughout the United States are reconstructing their vision of the traditional school setting in the hopes of better preparing students, and thereby, maintaining a competitive edge in a global economy. They are implementing innovative teaching strategies within the classroom, and including an element of competition amongst schools through the use of vouchers. A voucher system allows parents to send their

children to the school of their choice (Bradley, 1997). Thus, it appears that the schools are doing their part to improve student learning. What about the students who are not achieving, despite their tests scores, parents, and teachers indicating that they can? The old adage "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink" comes to mind. Can a teacher or parent guide a student in his or her learning if he or she does not perceive the thirst for knowledge?

Academic success is measured in the United States by national tests administered by individual schools to its students. It is on the basis of these tests that the nation ranks its academic achievement relative to other nations' academic achievement. Despite the importance of these tests, "...it is not uncommon for many students...to skip school when they know it's a testing day...the incentive for taking this test was rather minimal, it doesn't relate to either their report card marks, college admission, or anything" (Bradley, 1997, p. 7). Many of the students who do show up for the tests simply fill in random answers in order to complete the tests.

"At present, there are large numbers of adolescents with talent who are somewhat flat, disengaged, or distracted in school. Academically they drift along at mediocre level, if that; far below, it seems, what they could be achieving if they put their minds to it" (Griffin, 1988, p. ix). Dealing with these students is a problem today when there is an increased emphasis placed on the schools' responsibility to develop improved levels of academic excellence. "Although schools are being charged with bringing about higher levels of academic achievement, educators indicate that what they have learned about teaching, learning, and setting up schools does not work well

enough with...these 'dormant geniuses'" (Griffin, 1988, p. ix).

The term 'underachiever' denotes a negativity that many educators and researchers prefer to avoid. It refers to the student who has talent, but for some reason does not use it. These students do not take advantage of the opportunities in school to learn and grow. "(Underachievers) are not really students in the sense that they are studying anything. They are going to school; that is by and large all they are doing" (Griffin, 1988, p. 9). According to Rimm (1995), underachievement is a syndrome which has reached epidemic proportions. It exists in every classroom and numerous homes. It is a problem which "...destroys family life, minimizes classroom efficiency, and robs children of their motivation and sense of personal control" (Rimm, 1995, p. xvii). Underachieving students have not learned that achievement involves commitment and perseverance.

What Is Underachievement and What Causes It?

According to Rimm (1995) there is no biological explanation for inadequate school performance by capable children. She also absolves the educational institution as a specific cause since many other students with similar abilities do achieve. Underachievers appear to have not learned how to achieve, namely, to listen, read, study, or complete assignments. Rimm (1995) gives a further description of underachievement:

> (They) usually begin as ...bright and often very verbal preschoolers, but at some point their enthusiasm for learning and their satisfactory school performance change--gradually for some, suddenly for others...the obvious

> warning is the direct communication from teachers that these children are not working to their abilities. Parents also observe their children's disinterest and detachment from the school learning process. (p. 4)

What Do Underachievers Look Like?

Rimm (1995) has categorized the many varieties of underachievement into prototypes. Although a child may exhibit characteristics predominantly within one prototype, he or she may also exhibit a blend of attributes from other categories. Table 8 summarizes Rimm's (1995) prototypes of underachievement along with their characteristics along the contingencies of conformity to non-conformity and dependency to dominancy.

In the high-tech information-oriented society Americans are now living in, students can not afford to ignore the opportunity to learn and grow. "A college graduate today earns twice as much as a high school graduate and nearly three times as much as a high school dropout" (Olson, 1997, p. 7). At its core, America guarantees its citizens the right of freedom and the pursuit of happiness. What is not guaranteed, is that each citizen will achieve it. Students living in the United States of America must seize the opportunities to learn and succeed for themselves. They can not afford to go through life passively waiting for success to fall at their feet.

Table 8

Prototypes of Underachievement

Dependent Conformers	Dominant Conformers
Perfectionistic • perform well with concrete assignments • neat and obedient • set impossibly high standards • adolescence usually brings rebellion and/or problems Passiveness • daydreams • incomplete and careless with assignments • reluctant to answer questions often doing so with "I don't know" or "I forgot" • pleasant, but can not seem to concentrate	• personable and socially adept • participate only in activities in which they excel/win • claim disinterest or lack of challenge in other arenas • thrive as the 'big fish in a little pond' • lose confidence and control when faced with being less than first, outstanding, or an 'A' student
Dependent Non-Conformers	**Dominant Non-Conformers**
• may feign illnesses often • may be a loner, taunted and teased • do not often finish assignments without considerable help of a parent • have few friends and claim that others do not understand them	• manipulative and spoiled • blames others for problems • appears socially at ease, but circle of friends is unstable • uses creativity as an excuse for not producing regular assignments • may be rebellious or depressed

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Underachievement is a pervasive problem of students in classrooms throughout the United States. This fact has been documented on a national level. According to DeLeon (as cited by Rimm, 1995), "...the U.S. Office of Education reports that 40% of the students in the top 5 percent of high school graduating classes are not graduating from college" (p. 3). Lajoie and Shore (as cited in Rimm, 1995) further state that studies have found "...between 10 and 20% of high school drop outs are in the superior range of abilities" (p. 3). Underachievement wastes educational resources, frustrates ambitious teachers and parents, and undermines the confidence level of students. The problem of underachievement exists at the researcher's site as evidenced by an inconsistent relationship of effort, interest levels, and achievement scores. More specifically, these factors have been measured and documented through homework and participation percentages, overall grades, student surveys, and the researcher's anecdotal accounts.

Homework

At this site, the purpose of homework is to increase time on task in an effort to reinforce previously learned material and guide the student in independent learning. Carefully and well done homework will aid in the understanding of content and

mastery of skills and, therefore, will result in high levels of achievement. The targeted students generally understand and accept this relationship between homework and achievement, however, low homework percentages have been documented at this site, and have contributed to lower overall grades. Of the targeted students, 13% had homework percentages below 70%. These students were generally doing poorly overall. Less conspicuous, but also an important indicator of low motivation is the presence of a discrepancy between assessment figures and those for homework. At this site, 16% of the targeted students had an inconsistency of at least 10% between their assessment average and that of their homework. Interestingly, most of these students were capable of scoring within a B+ to an A range, but their overall grades ranged from an F to a B.

Similar to homework, participation in class increases time on task, reinforces learning, and provides students individual learning opportunities. Higher levels of participation should, therefore, also result in higher levels of achievement.

Participation

Data collection for participation at the site is measured through a system involving tokens and is generally oral in nature. Students are given tokens for volunteering responses, outscoring their partner in paired activities, attending tutoring sessions, and when their actions show effort above the normal expectations of the teacher. Tokens are then collected and counted every two or three weeks (depending on the number of opportunities for participation), and percentages are calculated by adding the total number of tokens collected from the class divided by the total number

of students. Despite ample opportunities for participation, low participation percentages have been recorded at the site with 20% of the targeted students having lower than a 70% rate of participation. Intriguing was the 24% of the targeted students, who showed capability of high achievement, but chose not to participate in regular class speaking activities. Whereas homework and participation are direct measures of student effort, overall grades sent home from school, are not.

Overall Grades

Overall grades are calculated at the site by averaging measures of effort and ability. Measures of effort include homework and participation percentages. Measures of ability are test and quiz averages as well as averages from alternative assessment tools (portfolios, role-play skits, projects, journals, graphic organizers, and interviews). The researcher recognizes that these categories of effort and ability are not mutually exclusive. Homework and participation do require ability, and assessment tools do require effort from the student. The researcher, however, categorized and measured them in this manner because the measures of effort were not evaluated, but merely counted. The measures of ability were evaluated and were also required to be completed or performed by each student. In the absence of evaluation, the student is credited only for the effort of doing the work. Although the degree of effort can not be factored out when assessing student work, ability can be approximated through the use of a variety of assessment tools. By comparing measures of effort with those of ability, the researcher documented underachievement at this site. As stated earlier, of the targeted students with high assessment scores,

16% had low homework percentages, and 24% had low participation percentages. Therefore, all of these students were receiving overall grades below their ability. Student surveys from the site also showed evidence of underachievement.

Student Surveys

An evaluation survey was administered to 37 students at the third and fourth year levels of German (See Appendix A). None of the respondents expressed that the homework was particularly difficult, and yet 13% had homework percentages below 70%. Only 3% reported a dislike of participating, however 20% had participation percentages below 70%. Twenty-seven percent felt that their overall grade was lower than what they were actually capable. Although these figures are not staggering, it clearly indicates a presence of underachievement at this site. These statistics lend quantifiable proof to the observations which follow.

Anecdotal Records

Finally, the researcher has seen evidence of the problem of underachievement at this site through personal anecdotal accounts. Several targeted students of the third and fourth year German class have shown persistent signs of underachievement. These students have shown high levels of ability on formal and/or informal assessments, but their disorganization, disinterest, detachment and/or lack of study skills earns them low achieving grades. They claim to complete assignments, but fail to turn them in because they have forgotten or lost them. They say that good grades are of no value to them so they are unwilling to put forth any more effort than they need to. They find the homework boring, or just do not want to do it. They report that they dislike

participating in class, but are also unwilling to make up participation points outside of class. Many of these underachievers claim to have understood the lesson/concept, but can not perform the skill correctly. Their chosen method of studying is to "look over the stuff." When provided with individual tutoring, these students have shown considerable improvement, but have not been able to maintain the improvement on their own with consistency.

If students are interested in a subject, as enrollment in the third or fourth year of an elective course would indicate, and capable of high levels of performance, it should follow that putting forth effort to achieve would be natural. To not do so causes the student to achieve below their capabilities, and thus, underachieve. As evidenced by low homework and participation percentages, overall grades, student surveys, and the researcher's anecdotal accounts, the problem of underachievement is clearly present at this site.

Probable Causes

Information from current literature concerning underachievement of students suggests several probable causes for the problem. The emergent causes focus on the interactions between the students and their teachers, and the students and their parents. Consideration was also noted for the effect of sibling and peer interactions with students, as well as societal pressures.

Student-Teacher Interactions

The interactions between students and their teachers can and often do evoke strong emotions which greatly affect the classroom climate. Classroom climate in turn

can greatly affect student learning. Mismatches in learning styles and teaching strategies, and prior negative learning experiences can adversely affect students' desire to learn. Their beliefs about their own ability to learn and about learning in general can also be negatively influenced.

Mismatch in learning styles. A mismatch in the learning style of a student with the teaching style of a teacher is a common and predictable problem. Wagner (1996) states that different students learn in different ways. An activity favored by one student may be detested by the next. A concept explained orally may be quickly picked up by an auditory learner, but a visual learner might need to see the concept explained before it is understood. The researcher surveyed 63 students at this site in the spring of 1997 in regards to their preferences for various activities and strategies that had been used. Thirty-eight percent of the students found group projects and activities to be very helpful and interesting, while 29% stated that they saw no point to them and felt that the work ended up unevenly divided. Thirty-eight percent of the students listed games involving repetition fun and helpful, whereas 13% found these types of games completely boring because they did not have to think critically. Several students complained that the pace of the class was too slow and that they wanted to learn more each day, and yet a few students expressed that they often did not understand things because the teacher went too fast. Although a wide variety of teaching strategies are used at this site, the learning styles of the students are also numerous.

Advocates of cooperative learning strategies argue that the traditional lecture does not allow many students the hands-on experience they need to understand the

content and develop the skills necessary for later on in life (Crosby & Howard, 1992). A few students from the on-site survey, however, indicated that they understood the material better when they listened to the teacher and the tapes. They actually felt more confused and missed the point of the exercise when they were actively involved.

Just as different students perceive some activities as helpful and others as pointless, different teachers value some forms of intelligence more highly than others. Proponents of theories on multiple intelligences explain that as students get older the schools become more departmentalized (Blythe, Gardner, & White, 1992). Even though people exhibit intelligence in a wide variety of ways, students are often labeled (or label themselves) as "dumb" or "smart" because of the grades they receive in particular classes. If there are inconsistencies in their grades from one class to the next, students are then perceived by teachers and parents as underachievers. Schools and teachers can have a dramatic effect on a student's achievement. Although teachers may employ a spectrum of methodologies successfully, it would be impossible to satisfy each and every student all of the time. Mismatches in teaching styles with learning styles are bound to occur. A teacher's philosophy is reflected not only in his or her manner of disseminating information, but also in his or her manner of assessing student work. Here too, the teacher-student relationship can be antagonistic.

Evaluative process. Another source of conflict amidst student learning styles and teaching strategies involves the evaluative process. As Kallick (1992) explains, when the discrepancy between a teacher's evaluation and a student's internal evaluation of his or her work is too great, the student experiences a loss of control that

ultimately injures his or her self-concept. According to Kallick (1992), depending on the personality of the student, the interpretation of that discrepancy by the student:

> ...leaves the student in conflict with his or her work and creates a tension that pulls the learner away from independent learning and toward learning for approval...the most significant motivating force (to perform in school) is the student's discovery of his or her capacity to do successful and good work. (p. 314)

As a result of incongruent evaluations, the learner is left unsure of his or her ability to do successful and good work. Combs (as cited by Burke, 1994) says that "...an individual's self-concept determines his or her behavior in almost everything that person does. It also affects intelligence, for people who believe they are able will try, while those who believe they are unable will not" (p. 142). By not involving students directly in the evaluative process, teachers can ultimately send the message that effort does not lead to success. When this occurs, students inevitably quit trying, and therefore, do not achieve at levels within their capabilities. In addition to teacher's methods for delivering instruction, a teacher's procedures for handling the classroom environment can also influence a student's achievement.

Classroom management as a cause. In addition to various teaching strategies, much attention has been given in the literature to the effects of classroom management strategies on a student's desire to learn. There are several elements of classroom environment that are especially problematic for underachievers (Rimm, 1995). The aspects of structure, competition, labeling, and boredom have shown to

have particularly harmful effects on these students. An inappropriate learning environment may even initiate the syndrome of underachievement.

A teacher whose guidelines and procedures are either too loosely structured or too rigidly structured will be counterproductive for the underachiever. Rimm (1995) says "loosely organized classrooms that provide no structure cause underachievers, who may already lack organizational skills, to flounder. They do not discipline themselves, and they habitually push limits" (p. 95). An underachiever who is dependent on individual attention will repeatedly seek the help of the teacher and be out of his or her seat if the classroom guidelines are not clearly established. This type of student will not learn to struggle independently to find answers, and therefore, will give up at the first sign of an obstacle. A classroom too rigidly structured provides an inappropriate environment tantamount to one too loosely structured. These classrooms are characterized by frequent reprimands which may serve as a form of attention for underachievers. Though negative, this attention is perceived as better than none, and creates a power struggle between a defiant underachiever and a rigid teacher. Rimm (1995) explains:

> These children see rigid control as a "call to battle" that they are determined to answer...(they) will correct and embarrass teachers in front of the class whenever possible. They will argue with them about rules, not hand in assignments they claim are irrelevant,...and manipulate power struggles among teachers, parents, and principles. Often the teachers' only way to control these children is with grades. However, these children

> usually prefer to fail rather than acknowledge themselves as losers...(they) may feel conformity would cause them to lose status with their classmates. They will continue to refuse to do assigned lessons regardless of threats or grades. (p. 96)

In either environment, neither the underachiever nor the teacher experiences success, but rather great frustration. These power struggles and depictions of manipulative behavior incite little productivity on the part of the student. Thus, if the student is not producing, he or she is also not achieving. Another element of the classroom environment, namely competition amongst peers, can inhibit the productivity of an underachiever, thereby decreasing his or her achievement.

Competition. A democratic society is fraught with competition. Competition creates a challenge for individuals to perform at their very best so that they finish on top. Businesses compete for buyers, individuals compete for jobs, students compete for entrance into colleges and for better grades, children compete for attention, just to name a few instances. However, the underachiever does not function well in competition. They have not learned to deal with the notion of losing. Rimm (1995) purports that underachievers "...are poor losers and may not even become involved in an activity unless they're almost certain they'll win...In a highly competitive classroom, their losses are that much more evident. The more frequently they see themselves as losers, the less they try" (p. 97-98). While achieving students thrive with a competitive challenge, underachieving students shut down. The initial causes of this inability to cope can be linked to one-sided competitive experiences in the past. They have either

always won, and therefore, fear defeat, or they have failed too often, and do not believe they are capable of winning in any situation. Either way, they miss repeated opportunities for growth, and never tap into their potential. Yet another debilitating characteristic of many school environments is the widespread practice of labeling behaviors which inhibit learning.

Labeling. When a child is not performing well in school, either behaviorally or academically, teachers and parents are likely to try and correct the problem. Because correcting the problem may require special help and extra work, state and federal governments have provided resources to fund certain conditions. Of course to be eligible for these funds, the problem must be assessed and identified, or labeled. The labeling of a problem, while providing needed assistance, also poses serious risks. As Rimm (1995) explains, "...labels affect self-expectations as well as teacher expectations and in some cases cause peer rejection, which may lead to further problems" (p. 107). The effect of teacher expectation on student achievement has been documented in the classic research study by Rosenthal and Jacobson (as cited by Rimm, 1995). Referred to as the Pygmalion Effect, this study showed that teacher expectations could be responsible for an average of a 15% decrease in grades (Rimm, 1995). A label can become a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy which further perpetuates negative behavior and low achievement. The factor of boredom affecting student achievement is discussed further.

Boredom. A common complaint of many children is that they are bored. Even on a beautifully sunny day, or with a closet full of toys, they are bored. In school,

underachievers also often claim to be bored. When the class or the teacher is uninteresting, then any student would be bored, not just underachievers. Depending on the student, however, Rimm (1995) says that it could mean a number of different things. For some it may be that the work is too hard, or too easy. It may indicate a fear of competing, or a power struggle with the teacher. It may mean that the child dislikes the subject, or would rather be playing a favorite sport or video game. What is crucial, is that "...these students' descriptions of classes as boring would continue regardless of the subject matter, content, or method" (Rimm, 1995, p. 115). If the work is actually too hard or easy, it presents a definite problem for the underachiever. As stated earlier, if the work is too hard, the underachiever will give up or not even try. If the work is too easy, the student may receive many rewards and attention for perfect or excellent work without having to put forth any effort. The lack of challenge in their early years cripples them later in their schooling by not teaching them perseverance. "...They have never experienced getting less than A grades either. They may label school as boring because of that new sense of effort they must now make or the feeling of failure that come with B's and C's" (Rimm, 1995, p. 116). Whether they are actually bored or not, they definitely are not exerting themselves so as to succeed. Hence, mismatches in learning styles, evaluative processes, and elements of the classroom environment can all adversely affect student achievement. The problem of underachievement can not adequately be examined, however, without a survey of the facets of the interactions between students and their parents which hinder student achievement.

Student-Parent Interactions

Just as teachers hope to teach well, parents hope to parent well. But despite earnest intentions, the interactions between parents and their children can perpetuate problems of underachievement. Rimm (1995) explains that parents can be easily confused by the complexity of their child's behavior or, pressured by conflicts in their daily lives, interact in a manner that reinforces negative conduct. The factors of overworked parents, inconsistent or oppositional parents, and parents with a negative attitude toward education all contribute to the problem of underachievement.

Overworked parents. A rise in the cost of living and an increase in the value placed on material possessions has escalated the number of working hours per week for many American families. Garbarino (1997) cites a report claiming a "...50% drop over the last 30 years in the amount of time parents are spending with kids...." (p. 14). In an on-site student survey, the researcher found that 90% of the students had parents who both worked (See Appendix B). Although working parents present children with productive role models, they often unintentionally relay negative messages about work as well. Rimm (1995) states that parents model negative attitudes about work when they frequently complain about their job, their salaries, or their bosses. If one parent faults the other for spending too much time at work at the expense of family time, the child will certainly not wish to follow this model. Furthermore, if parents are unsupportive of each other's desire to continue their education, complaining that it demands too much time or is a waste of time, they are again modeling pessimistic values toward education. This, in turn, does nothing to

motivate the student toward achievement. Inconsistent and oppositional parents can also give rise to the problem of underachievement.

Inconsistency and opposition. Inconsistent messages and opposition occur within traditional two-parent families and single-parent homes, but more frequently between divorced parents. When children receive contradictory messages from parents, it provides them with an escape from their problems and undermines their self esteem. A child will become antagonistic with the stricter parent in an effort to avoid meeting his or her higher expectations and to rally the support of the more lenient parent. Rimm (1995) claims that "...there is little reward for these children in achievement because success does not create the close, sheltering relationship caused by failure" (p. 382). The demands of the stricter parent are depicted as unrealistic or too harsh, and the child escapes from opportunities to develop resiliency by meeting a challenge and working through it. If students are continually successful in school, it may appear as though they are high achievers. It is unlikely, however, that students will never face an obstacle. Without resiliency, students will not be able to work through a roadblock toward achievement. Parents can further cripple childrens' achievement through their attitudes toward education.

Negative attitudes toward learning. School, and especially high school, is not always a pleasant experience for everyone. Parents were also at one time students and may try to support and empathize with their children by recalling difficulties they had with learning. Although their anecdotes may make their children feel closer to them, they are presenting a harmful image of school and learning. As Rimm (1997)

explains, "...a most lethal cause of student underachievement is parents' lack of support for schools and teachers. Disrespect for education by parents sabotages educators' power to teach" (p. 20). This disrespect places parents and teachers in adversarial roles rather than allies working together for the common good of the child. Though many parents are unaware of their destructive effects on their childrens' achievement, being overworked, inconsistent, oppositional and having a negative attitude toward education is harmful to childrens' ability to succeed. Aside from the home and school setting, society also impacts childrens' achievement.

Societal Effects

Changes in society have had a remarkable effect on young children, which has exacerbated the problem of underachievement. A decline in moral standards, an increase in competitive pressures, and mass media are noteworthy contributors to the rise in the occurrence of this dilemma.

Moral standards. One only has to turn on the television, or pick up a newspaper to be reminded of the prevalence of teenage sex, drug use, and involvement in crime. It is not the researcher's intention to condemn the morality of America, but as Rimm (1995) points out:

> ...an environment that supports extensive alcohol consumption, drug abuse, gang violence, and permissive sexual behavior provides considerable temptation for adolescents. The ready availability of such distractions from the educational scene increases the difficulty of exciting adolescents toward learning. By comparison, school may indeed seem boring. (p. 385)

Teachers are burdened with the charge of captivating students' attention with material not intended to be sensationalistic. If students are not interested in the material, they will be unlikely to work toward achievement. In addition to pressures for sex, drugs, and violence, students today endure many competitive pressures not experienced by students in the past.

Competitive pressure. American teenagers are not shielded from the competitive pressures of their society as they once were. Working hard in school is no longer the primary responsibility for many adolescents. "An increasing population, career requirements for more extensive education...narrowing career options ...dramatically add to the competitive pressures in our society" (Rimm, 1995, p. 385). According to Wagner (1996), the majority of jobs today are more highly skilled and require education beyond a high school diploma. Even a "...job on an average assembly line now requires at least two years of training beyond high school..." (Wagner, 1996, p. 147). To pay for the increased demand for a college education, as well as increased tuition, many families rely on the income earned by teenage family members. At this site, 32% of the targeted students work outside of school. To be able to get to and from their jobs, many of the teenagers at this site need their own transportation which further adds to their need for extra income. After school jobs naturally reduce or eliminate time available for studying. Working late can further add to the problem when students do not receive enough sleep to be fresh and alert during school. In addition to paying for college tuition and transportation, many teenagers are exceedingly influenced by society's emphasis on materialism.

Materialism. To further compound competitive challenges within today's society, there exists an increasing emphasis on personal interests and material goods. Although adults can be persuaded through advertisement, "...young people are easily seduced by material culture that promotes instant gratification" (Berreth & Berman, 1997, p. 25). Many young people perceive a need to define themselves through their appearance, and feel this requires expensive designer clothing, department store make-up, and salon manicures and hairstyles. Of course, all of this costs money. Garbarino (1997) feels that American children are commercial targets. Television, films, and the music industry flood homes in the United States with images and idols of financial success. Absent are the struggles, failures, and hard work along the way. One only has to look at the popularity of purchasing lottery tickets to see value placed on wealth and the lack of desire to put forth much effort in achieving it. As Rimm (1995) states, even "...sports and music heroes are more reputed for the fantastic salaries they command than for their hard work and talent" (p. 386). Worse yet are their commercial endorsements which make their yearly salaries pale in comparison. The absence of an appreciation of goal setting, hard work and persistence cripples many teenagers in school. They seek instead immediate reward, and have little regard for intangible values which would help them to achieve.

Just as childrens' personalities are shaped and affected by a complex intermingling of encounters within the home, the school, and society, so too is their motivation to achieve. Causes for underachievement should not be pin pointed to one particular environment, although one may be more imbalanced than the others. The

tendency to focus on one emergent cause for underachievement is far too simplistic and, more importantly, unrealistic. To understand the dilemma of underachievement, one must take an all-encompassing look at the everyday interactions experienced by students. These interactions include those between the student and teachers, the student and parents, and the student and the general society. Following, the researcher surveyed several strategies, from past and present, to combat underachievement.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Analysis of probable cause data and literature suggests that underachievement is a complex syndrome that is affected by a myriad of sources within a child's daily life. The variables that initiate and perpetuate this problem can exist in the child's home as well as his or her school setting. The fundamental problem lies in the child's perceptions of and attitudes toward work and learning. Since causes for the syndrome of underachievement are numerous, it would follow that successful reversal of the syndrome should target several factors. Much of the literature relating to a student's desire to learn focuses on the classroom environment, and interventions are primarily student centered or teacher centered. More recent literature indicates that no single solution strategy will eradicate underachievement, but rather that multi-faceted interventions that implement changes within the classroom and at home can foster achievement in children.

The researcher surveyed literature on solutions for low achievement that included tracking and pull-out programs, several innovative theories on teaching strategies, student focused interventions, and the Trifocal Method of Reversing Underachievement. These programs have yielded a variety of results; some favorably affected student learning, while others actually compounded the problem. These

solutions will be discussed in this section.

Tracking and Grouping by Abilities

The notion that different kinds of education are appropriate for different kinds of of people has been argued since the classical period in ancient Greece (Levine & Ornstein, 1989). According to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, a liberal, academic education is suitable for the intellectual classes, whereas a vocational education is more desirable for the working classes. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Martin Luther, with the help of Philip Melanchthon, established the German gymnasium, for the upper classes, and the Vernacular school, for the common people (Levine & Ornstein, 1989). "The effect of the Protestant Reformation on education was to fix firmly the dual-track system of schools" (Levine & Ornstein, 1989, p. 113). The dual-track system of education was imported to North America by European immigrants, but throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the "...forces of frontier egalitarianism, political democratization, and economic change worked to erode these educational structures and create the American system of universal, public education" (Levine & Ornstein, 1989, p. 162). Theorists Robert Hutchins, and Mortimer Adler advocated a general curriculum for all students. These perennialists argued that to track students was to deny those students in the vocational track "...genuine equality of educational opportunity" (Levine & Ornstein, 1989, p. 212). Proponents of grouping by abilities assert that it, in theory, allows teachers to teach in a way that is best suited for each class. Unfortunately, in practice, remedial students are often shortchanged. According to Clark and Starr (1991, p. 330), "...classes for

"slow" students may have a deleterious effect on their personalities. The students learn that they are not as good as other people." They also state that as a result, remediated students suffer a drop in levels of motivation. Rimm (1995, p. 110) also cautions that the labeling effects of many tracking and pull-out programs can "...narrow prospects for performance by a child...the resulting peer pressures and lowered parent and teacher expectations may have permanent debilitating effects on children's school performance." Because of the negative attention received by tracking and pull-out programs, many school districts have abolished these programs from their public policy. However, given that there are more students today being educated in the United States than ever before, there remains a conflict between what is ideal and what is realistically feasible. It can be argued that individualized and small-group instruction in mixed-ability classes can have better results than homogeneous grouping, but as Cohen (as cited by Levine & Ornstein, 1989) points out, "...such instruction is expensive and difficult to deliver effectively, and many schools have been unsuccessful in trying to do so" (p. 589). Oakes (as cited by Levine & Ornstein, 1989) purports that "...most (schools) continue to see ability grouping as a sensible, even equitable educational policy" (p. 590). Thus, there exists a conflict between what is feasible and what is best for the child. In terms of innovative theories on teaching and learning strategies, the learning environment will be addressed.

Learning Environment

In addition to being competent in their content area, teachers are also expected to create and maintain a learning environment that is nurturing and stimulating (Clark

& Starr, 1991). In this type of an environment, students are more likely to feel motivated to learn. A student's motivation can be greatly affected by a teacher's classroom management skills, teaching techniques, and methods of evaluation (Clark & Starr, 1991).

Students learn better and are more motivated to learn in an environment that is supportive, caring, and reasonably structured. Clark and Starr (1991, p. 73) state that it is important to "...build up students' feeling of self-esteem and...keep the class moving along in a lively fashion in a pleasant supportive atmosphere in which you reinforce desirable behavior...." Chapman (1993) adds trust and belonging as essential elements for motivating students to learn. If a child feels cared about and included in the classroom, he or she will be more willing and able to contribute and take part in learning activities. In terms of the learning environment, the area of teaching strategies will be further discussed.

Teaching strategies. Recent educational theories have focused on the personalization of learning and student involvement in learning. Principles of multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, and alternative assessment all stress the importance of teaching strategies that take into account individual differences and that provide opportunities for student ownership as motivators for learning.

Multiple intelligences. In 1983, Gardner introduced his Multiple Intelligence Theory. Gardner (as cited by Chapman, 1993) replaced the notion that individuals possess a fixed amount of intelligence with the concept that everyone has a unique blend of strengths from distinct intelligence areas, and that weaker areas can and

should be developed. His theory emphasizes diverse routes for learning, as well as diverse assessment tools for measuring growth and progress. Gardner (as cited by Chapman, 1993) originally identified seven intelligences: Verbal / Linguistic, Musical / Rhythmic, Logical / Mathematical, Visual / Spatial, Bodily / Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal. A proponent of Multiple Intelligences, Chapman (1993) asserts that many students are low achievers, unmotivated, or labeled at risk due to the concentration in many schools on the two intelligences of Verbal / Linguistic and Logical / Mathematical. The underlying principles of Multiple Intelligences support that each person is born with all the intelligences in varying capacities and that each intelligence is modifiable and can be taught (Chapman, 1993). The development of the seven intelligences is best facilitated by providing the elements of trust and belonging, the instruction of meaningful content, an enriched environment, opportunities for choice, and adequate time for learning and production. Teachers need to provide variety in the style, complexity, and challenge of authentic problem solving activities. Assessments should match the authentic task assigned. Advocates for instruction founded on the Multiple Intelligence Theory feel that motivation will be encouraged when a student is actively involved in the learning and evaluative processes (Burke, 1994).

Chapman (1993) recommends strategies that provide students with opportunities to learn and demonstrate what they learn according to their intelligence strengths and weaknesses. Table 9 presents several examples of activities for each intelligence category. Thus, by providing a combination of strategies utilizing many

different intelligences, all students are afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and mastery, capitalizing on their strengths while developing their weaknesses. Integral to many strategies of Multiple Intelligence Theory, cooperative grouping techniques will be visited as well.

Table 9

Multiple Intelligence and Learning Strategy Suggestions

Intelligence Strength	Strategy Suggestion
Verbal / Linguistic	•computers •magazines •tape recorders •display of work •dramatic reading •games •variety of methods •mnemonics •cooperative learning •graphic organizers •comic books
Musical / Rhythmic	•create and use songs, raps, cheers, jingles, poems •music mnemonics •recite choral reading •music and dance of different cultures •background noise and music
Logical / Mathematical	•puzzles •calculators •games •patterns and their relationships •research •categorizing •analogies •time lines •outlines •Venn diagrams •computers •mnemonics
Visual / Spatial	•analogies •posters, charts, graphics and pictures •illustrations and sketches •props •use of overhead and board •active imagination
Bodily / Kinesthetic	•field trips •role playing, charades •games •manipulative environment •cooperative learning •interviews
Intrapersonal	•goal setting •journals •metacognition •silent reading •reflection •visualization
Interpersonal	•videos •textbook •software, INTERNET •jigsaw •wraparounds •cooperative groups •electronic mail •creative tasks •graphic organizers •think-pair-share

Cooperative learning. In addition to teaching specific content and skills, cooperative learning techniques provide instruction on social and emotional skills

development which has shown to have a "...long-term positive effect on students' interactions with others, on their attitudes toward school, and on their academic achievement" (Cummings & Haggerty, 1997, p. 28). Learning generally progresses better when its motivators are intrinsic, when students learn what they learn because they want to learn it. According to Clark and Starr (1991), natural motives are often more powerful than the usual extrinsic incentives (such as grades) present in most classes. The intrinsic desires for action, to play and have fun, and friendship can be satisfied through cooperative grouping activities.

Costa (as cited by Bellanca & Fogarty, 1991) explains that cooperative learning activities reflect a more natural learning environment where humans learn first through social interactions, and then internalize their experiences. He also states that through these interactions with others, students learn an abundance of intellectual skills, such as persistence and responsibility for others (as cited by Bellanca & Fogarty, 1991). Creating an environment wherein children can become more responsible has proven to enhance academic achievement (Solomon, et al., 1988).

Cooperative learning strategies also support students' independence of thought which has shown to have a positive effect on self-esteem, self-confidence, and orientation toward learning tasks (Bellanca, & Fogarty, 1991). In addition to the social benefits inherent in cooperative learning, students also reap personal rewards. They learn that one can win without someone else having to lose. Communication between students fosters active learning which makes class more lively and reduces the possibility of boredom. Finally, cooperative grouping affords all

students the chance to participate and increases their sense of belonging (Costa, Bellanca, & Fogarty, 1992). Consequently, by increasing their self esteem and interaction with their peers, cooperative learning raises students' intrinsic motivation for learning. Also in terms of the learning environment, the role of evaluation in affecting student motivation is forthcoming.

Alternative assessment. Many educators and parents agree that traditional testing and grades are too often an inaccurate reflection of what a child knows and can do (Burke, 1994). Since grades affect the self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation of students, much attention has been given recently to the development of alternative forms of assessing and evaluating student work (Burke, 1994). The term alternative assessment basically refers to "...alternatives to traditional multiple-choice, standardized achievement tests; second...to direct examination of student performance on significant tasks that are relevant to life outside of school" (Worthen as cited by Burke, 1994, p. xix). A shift is being made from reliance on grades toward descriptors of student progress such as portfolios, conferences, anecdotal records, checklists, and role-play scenarios. Advocates of alternative assessment stress that it is not as important that a student can acquire knowledge, but rather that he or she can use the requisite skills and strategies in problem solving situations (Burke, 1994). Alternative assessments generally incorporate some element of student choice which empowers students and favorably affects their desire to learn. As important as the teacher can be in affecting student motivation, the student is also essential for motivating himself or herself.

Student Interventions

Research on student focused interventions for improving motivation and achievement include the areas of goal setting, organizational skills, and positive role model identification (Rimm, 1995). These strategies seek to increase the underachieving student's sense of responsibility.

Goal setting. When goals are set realistically, they can be very powerful motivators for students (Berliner & Casanova, 1996). As Rimm explains (1995), setting realistic short-term goals enables students to experience a sense of internal locus of control which ultimately raises their self-confidence. This in turn, positively affects motivation, and helps students to achieve at levels of their ability. A key factor in goal setting involves organizational skills as well.

Organizational skills. Rimm (1995) states that many underachievers have problems with organization, whether it be information, time, or their belongings. They often complain that they have lost assignments, do not know how to begin an assignment, or ran out of time. "(Underachievers) often feel overwhelmed by long-term assignments. They postpone and procrastinate" (Rimm, 1995, p. 290). Rimm (1995) suggests providing the students with weekly assignment sheets, setting up homework hot lines, having students develop creative reminders, and assisting students in planning long-term assignments. These tactics will help students to become organized, thereby increasing achievement. Identifying positive role models can also increase achievement.

Role model identification. Students will learn more appropriate behaviors when they have competent role models to emulate (Rimm, 1995). In this light, many schools have attempted to set up mentoring programs to provide students with an approachable contact at school. Rimm (1995) gives much credence to the influence appropriate role model identification has on the reversal of underachievement. By identification, she means "...the process by which children select and unconsciously copy family models..." (Rimm, 1995, p. 227). Although Rimm (1995) feels that fathers and mothers are ideal role models if they are positive and achievement oriented, teachers can also serve as valuable role models. By copying appropriate behaviors of productive role models, students can increase their levels of accomplishment. Students and teachers in isolation can not have as much impact on motivation as they can if they team up, with the addition of parents. This suggestion is outlined in the Trifocal Model strategy.

Trifocal Model

Rimm (1995) outlines a solution for reversing underachievement, The Trifocal Model, which is so called because it focuses on the child, the parents, and the school. This model consists of the following six steps: assessment, communication, changing expectations, role model identification, correction of deficient learning skills, and steps specific to type of underachiever (Rimm, 1995).

Assessment. The first step in the process, assessment, is done both formally and informally. Its purpose is to determine the extent and the type of the underachievement. Formal assessments are done through the administration of IQ

tests, achievement measures (developed by Rimm, 1995), parent inventories, teacher observation checklists, and student's self-reported inventories. Informal assessments are conducted through general teacher observations and anecdotal records, and parent observations of student's study habits and attitudes toward learning. As part of the informal assessment, the student is identified by his or her type of underachievement. Rimm (1995) identifies several different types of underachievement personalities depending on the student's tendency to be dominant versus dependent, and conforming, nonconforming, or manipulative.

Communication. The second step in the Trifocal Model involves initiating and maintaining communication between the teacher and parent (Rimm, 1995). The original contact can be made by either the teacher or parent, but should involve a conference to discuss the student's lack of achievement. The communication phase also involves tracking the student's progress, which should be shared with the student and parent at regular daily or weekly meetings. Rimm (1995) stresses the importance of keeping these meetings positive and constructive, and that "...(the meetings) become the means for assessing and reinforcing efforts, setting goals, and clarifying consequences" (p. 210).

Changing expectations. Once communication has been initiated, detrimental low expectations on the part of parents, teachers, peers, siblings, and the students themselves need to be changed. Rimm (1995) emphasizes that praise for approval be casual and consistent, and warns that overpraising a child can lead to feelings of extreme pressure. Underachieving students commonly believe that their successes

are the result of luck or a benevolent teacher, and therefore, they do not believe that their efforts will make a difference. With these students, Rimm (1995) urges, it is paramount that the teacher and parents show unfaltering belief in the students' ability to achieve at higher levels, and consistently insist on their effort.

Identification. Along with changing expectations, parents and teachers should encourage students to identify with some positive role model to further orient them in an environment of achievement. As noted earlier, this person could be any number of people in frequent contact with the student. Rimm (1995) explains that the characteristics of nuturance, similarity, and power all encourage the process of identification. She warns that, unfortunately, many underachievers are attracted to inappropriate role models who could actually reinforce or worsen their negative habits and attitudes toward learning (Rimm, 1995).

Final phases. The final two steps in the Trifocal Method involve the correction of learning deficiencies and modifications for specific types of underachievement. In these phases, Rimm (1995) suggests tutoring, gives several ideas for reducing student anxiety, and outlines comprehensive modifications for parents to make in the home environment.

Although the solutions for underachievement are at times as complex and cumbersome as the causes for this syndrome, it seems clear that its successful reversal must target as many sources for the problem as possible. Evidence from the literature indicates that modifications made by the parents, teachers, and students working together are the most manageable and effective. Having examined current

digests, the researcher combined solutions from several sources to develop a three-pronged intervention for turning around underachievement at the site.

Project Objectives

As a result of increasing the variety of teaching strategies, implementing student goal setting and responsibility contracts, and increasing communication between home and school, during the period of September, 1997 and January, 1998, the targeted students of the third and fourth year German classes will decrease signs of underachievement as measured by homework percentages, participation percentages, and a variety of assessment tools to include teacher-made tests, quizzes, and performance rubrics.

Project Processes

1. Teacher materials and strategies that facilitate motivation and, therefore, achievement will be developed and implemented.
    a. A Multiple Intelligences Inventory will be administered and discussed with the students.
    b. Cooperative Grouping Strategies will be used in the teacher's lessons
    c. A variety of assessment strategies will be used, with a focus on performance-based activities and collaborative evaluations.
2. Targeted students will be contacted, and with their approval, and the approval of their parents, will be contracted to develop skills in goal setting and responsibility.
    a. Teacher will contact parents of students identified as showing signs of

underachievement.

b. Parents and targeted students will meet with teacher three times (at beginning, middle, and end of semester) for a conference to discuss the contract and sign it.

c. Targeted students will meet with the teacher every two weeks to discuss progress with goals and responsibilities, and their perceptions of their achievement.

d. Students will bring progress report from teacher to parent.

3. Parents of the targeted students will be contacted, and with their consent, will help their child to fulfill the contract terms.

a. Parents will act as a positive role model for targeted students to foster a positive attitude for learning and school.

b. Parents will complete a progress report for their child every two weeks to be given to teacher by the student.

c. Parents will complete short activities (periodically) with their students to help engage them in their child's learning.

Action Plan

The following action plan is designed to implement a three-pronged approach of intervention. The focus of this method targets the teacher, the underachieving student, and his or her parents. It seeks to strengthen communication between the home and school, make accommodations for individual learning styles, and raise the self-concept and responsibility of the underachieving student, thus resulting in higher

levels of achievement. Specifically, the intervention includes: an increased variety of teaching methods, student goal-setting contracts, and a home-school liaison.

At the beginning of the semester, students will complete an attitude survey and a multiple intelligence inventory. Past performance indicators including homework percentages, participation percentages, and grades will have been gathered and analyzed (teacher at this site has the unique experience of having worked with all students in the previous year). Using information from these items, the teacher will assess the students' attitudes, intelligence strengths and weaknesses, and achievement level. The parents will also receive a letter explaining the intervention program to be part of the regular classroom instruction.

After reviewing the information gathered, the teacher will contact the parents of those students showing excessive signs of underachievement. These parents and students will be invited to participate in the contracting and home-school liaison portions of the intervention. Upon consent and agreement of both the parents and the underachieving student, these students will be contracted and involved in the three-pronged approach for the remainder of the semester.

The following steps will be taken to implement the intervention.

I. Variety in Instructional Methods

A. Who:

All students in the two identified high school German classes will receive instruction through a variety of strategies.

B. When:

The use of these methods will be ongoing throughout the school year. The two classes meet late morning and early afternoon.

1. Multiple Intelligence Activities: The teacher will incorporate activities stressing the seven intelligences at least once per unit of study (a unit generally spans a one month time period).
2. Cooperative Learning Strategies: The teacher will integrate a variety of grouping strategies into every lesson. A specific team building and/or social skill will be focused on once a month.
3. Authentic Assessment Strategies: The teacher will use various forms of authentic assessment for at least fifty percent of the student's assessment grade (The remaining fifty percent will be comprised of traditional test and quiz grades).
    a. Portfolios: The students will file and keep track of their assessments in their portfolio on a weekly basis. In addition, they will include periodic (approximately once a month) writing assignments and/or journal reflections.
    b. Role-play skits: The students will perform skits as a culminating activity at the end of each unit (once a month). The students will also perform impromptu

dialogs on a semi-weekly basis.

c. Projects: The students will complete one group project during the semester.

d. Graphic Organizers: The students may opt to produce a graphic organizer to demonstrate learning in place of one section quiz (given approximately every two weeks), and in place of one vocabulary quiz (given approximately every two weeks).

C. Where:

The third year German class meets in the regularly scheduled German classroom, and has the advantage of visual displays throughout the room. The fourth year German class meets in a classroom normally occupied by an English classroom, and lacks the visual stimulus of German phrases and displays.

D. Why:

The purpose of varying instruction is to increase student interest and motivation, better meet individual learning needs, improve social skills, and increase student ownership and responsibility for learning.

E. How:

1. Multiple Intelligence Activities: The teacher will incorporate activities that involve different intelligences into the daily

activities. The students will also be given choices for projects and assessments that will capitalize on their intelligence strengths.

2. Cooperative Learning Strategies: Partner and group work has been and will continue to be integrated into the daily activities. Instruction on team building and the development of social skills will be added to foster a more positive learning environment and give a sense of belonging to the students.

3. Authentic Assessment Strategies: A combination of portfolios, role-play skits, projects, journals, graphic organizers, and interviews will be used to complement tests and quizzes for assessment purposes.

II. Student goal-setting contracts

A. Who:

Underachieving students and their parents agreeing to the contract phase. The teacher is also assumed to take part in the contracting and goal-setting.

B. When:

Contracts will begin within the first month of the semester and continue throughout the duration of the semester. Contracting will begin at an initial parent-student-teacher conference. Contracted

students will meet with the teacher every two weeks to review their progress and possibly amend their contract. Meetings and conferences will be held outside of class time, generally before or after school.

C. Where:

Conferences and meetings will be held at school, either in the regular German classroom, or in an available conference room.

D. Why:

The rational behind the goal-setting contracts is to help the underachieving students focus on their strengths and weaknesses, take responsibility for their learning, and increase their successes with learning and school.

E. How:

The goal-setting contract will be a written agreement between the teacher, student, and parents. It will specify specific areas for improvement, agreed upon by all. The students will also fill in their perceptions of the process.

III. Home-school liaison

A. Who:

Teacher, underachieving students, and their parents. This group will be the same as the student goal-setting contract group.

B. When:

An initial conference will be held at the beginning of the semester. Mid- and post-semester conferences will be set up at that time. A progress report will be sent home from the teacher every two weeks. A home-progress report will be sent to the teacher every two weeks. Additional phone contact will be made as necessary throughout the semester.

C. Where:

Conferences will be held at school. Parent-student learning activities will be done at home. Other communication (phone calls and progress reports) will be transient.

D. Why:

The purpose of the home-school liaison is to improve communication and reinforce classroom interventions. It is also to increase the support and involvement of the parents in their child's learning.

E. How:

Parents will be asked to implement interventions at home by:

1. Monitoring homework, projects, and study skills.
2. Completing home-progress reports every two weeks.
3. Completing small German activities with their child to share in their child's learning experiences.
4. Providing appropriate praise and encouragement for successes. Also possibly, appropriate incentives.

Methods of Assessment

In order to evaluate the effects of the intervention, data will be collected on homework percentages, participation percentages, and various assessment tools. A student survey will also be administered and collected to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the various teaching methods. Teacher anecdotal records will be kept throughout the semester. A post-semester conference will be held with the teacher, targeted students and their parents to discuss and compare current and past performances. The teacher will also solicit perceptions of the interventions from the parents and the targeted students.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

A variety of teaching strategies, student goal setting and responsibility contracts, and increased communication between home and school were implemented in the third and fourth year German classes in an effort to decrease signs of underachievement. Underachievement was measured by homework percentages, participation percentages, and various assessment tools to include teacher made tests, quizzes, performance rubrics, and student surveys.

During the second week of the new school year, a letter of explanation was sent home to the parents of all students of the targeted classrooms explaining the intervention plan that would be implemented at various levels within the classroom during regular classroom instruction (See Appendix C). Also during the second week of the new school year, the students were given an interest survey to determine student attitudes toward learning and German in particular (See Appendix D). The survey also measured their learning preferences according to their strengths within various multiple intelligences.

Instructional Methods

A variety of instructional methods were used throughout the semester in an attempt to better meet the learning needs of the targeted students. A combination of

activities implementing multiple intelligence strategies, cooperative grouping strategies and authentic assessment strategies were used (See Appendix E, F, and G respectively).

The teacher at the site incorporated activities stressing all seven of the multiple intelligences at least once per unit of study. According the results of the student interest survey, the targeted students showed a predominance of strength in the Interpersonal intelligence. The Verbal / Linguistic and Logical / Mathematic intelligences were also strongly represented within the classes of the targeted students. The Intrapersonal intelligence was only present in a small percentage of the targeted students. In response to these findings, the frequency in which some of the alternative assessment strategies were used was altered from the original action plan. These deviations will be discussed in the summary of the alternative assessment strategies.

An assortment of cooperative learning strategies was integrated into every lesson for the classes of the targeted students. A specific team building or social skill was focused on approximately once a month. During the first week of the school year, students were asked to decorate their portfolio folders to reflect either their personality and/or a particular interest. They were then asked to share their folders with a partner, who in turn, shared this information with yet another person within their group. Finally, several students volunteered to introduce their classmate to the rest of the class, and share the classmate's folder. It was hoped that this activity would increase familiarity among the classmates in a non-threatening manner. Team building activities involved

assigning roles of responsibility for each group member, problem solving activities, and evaluating the participation of each group member. Activities to improve social skills included focusing on encouraging participation, seeing the task through to the end, disagreeing reasonably, and summing it up. In addition to multiple intelligence and cooperative learning strategies, the teacher at the site used several forms of alternative assessment.

Alternative Assessments

Alternative assessments were used for approximately half of the students' assessment grade. The students filed and kept track of their assessments in their portfolio folders on a regular basis. They also included periodic writing assignments and journal reflections. The journal reflections were meant to serve as goal setting strategies, and personal benchmark feedback. They recorded reflections at the beginning, middle and end of the semester.

As a culminating activity at the end of a unit, the students performed role-play skits twice throughout the semester. It was originally intended that they be performed at the end of each unit, but due to the number of other forms of assessment being used, the teacher at the site reduced the frequency of this assessment. The intention, after all, was to provide alternative forms of assessment, not necessarily additional assessments. The students were also periodically (three times per semester) assessed by performing impromptu dialogs demonstrating their mastery of various communicative functions.

The students completed one group project during the semester which incorporated the major points learned within a particular unit of study. The third year German students researched a particular German city of their choice utilizing INTERNET, library, and teacher prepared resources to create a brochure and poster for their city. The students of the fourth year German class applied the rules for creating a fairy tale to create either a puppet play, role-play skit, an original fairy tale, or a game. They presented their projects using several entertaining methods including: Power-Point software, stages, costumes, props, overheads, and game boards.

It was intended that the targeted students be allowed to choose to produce a graphic organizer as an alternative means of assessing learning in place of a section quiz or vocabulary quizzes. Unfortunately, none of the students chose to create such a product. Many of the targeted students are in several weighted courses, and consequently, have a rather cumbersome load. They are often required to do projects and assignments for a few or more of their classes concurrently. Since these projects require a great deal of their time and energy, many opt for the traditional form of assessment which for these high level learners can be easier. Thus concluding the historical description of the instructional methods, the student goal setting and contracting phase of the intervention follows.

Student Goal Setting and Contracting

At the beginning of the school year, the researcher analyzed data from homework, participation, and assessment percentages from the previous semester for the targeted students. The researcher found five students with indicators of low

motivation such as low grades that might interfere with their success in the following semester. A phone call was made to the parents of these students to invite them to participate in the individual contracting and home-school partnership components of the intervention plan. The teacher also met individually with the principal, head of guidance, and the foreign language chair to discuss the notion of contracting with the targeted students and to receive approval and support for the program.

At the site, it took considerably longer than was anticipated to reach a parent from each home and set up a conference time. Sixty percent of the targeted students for contracting chose to attend a conference. Conferences were held with the students (except for one case, in which the student was not present), parent(s) and teacher to design an achievement contract (See Appendix H). After the conferences, only 40% of the students originally targeted returned the contracts signed by themselves and their parents. Bimonthly meetings were set up to discuss goal setting and organizational strategies, and to revise the original contracts. Weekly progress report forms were to be brought to the teacher by the student to be filled out and then sent home to the parents (See Appendix I). Periodically, the teacher would elicit the feedback of the parents from the report regarding the progress of the student. The teacher attempted to contact the parents of the targeted students by phone once a month. If necessary, the students were to attend regular tutoring sessions to improve their performance and understanding in class. Students were also encouraged to use their German skills outside of the classroom as often as possible, and in a manner of personal interest.

From the first week after contracting and continuing on throughout the semester, the teacher had difficulty setting meetings with the students, getting the students to bring progress report forms, and getting the students to show up for tutoring appointments. The same frustration was noted when trying to call home to parents to report problems. It sometimes required several phone calls and messages to reach the parents, often spanning two weeks time. Afterwards, the students would show up for that week's meeting, but then not for the next one. The teacher made repeated reminders to the students about meetings, progress reports, and tutoring sessions which seemed to drive the students away. However, backing off of the reminders did not improve the responsibility on the part of the students either. The researcher was able to meet with one of the contracted students toward the beginning of second quarter, and concerns relating to the contract were discussed. The student expressed feelings of pressure and unfairness; it was felt that the targeted students had been singled out and were really trying hard, but did not seem to like having so much attention drawn to their weaknesses. Since the researcher had never intended for the special attention to be negative, the focus of the intervention at this point was shifted away from the individual contracting and toward the instructional strategies within the classrooms. Further phone and at-school conferences with the students, parent(s), and teacher yielded a desire from all that the contracts be terminated. Again, due to busy schedules and also the holidays, this process took much longer than was anticipated.

The researcher had intended on having the parents and targeted students complete small German activities together to encourage a sharing in the child's learning experience. These activities were meant to increase the students' sense of ability, and thereby, increase their motivation. Unfortunately, the frustrations encountered with trying to meet with the students outside of class prevented the teacher from ever being able to implement this phase of the home-school liaison. The results of these interventions will be introduced and examined in the next section.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

To discern the effects of increased variety of teaching strategies, individual student contracting, and the home-school communication, data were collected for homework percentages, participation percentages, and assessment scores for first and second quarters. Student surveys and anecdotal records elicited further insight into the influence of the intervention methods.

Homework, Participation, and Alternative Assessments

Table 11 presents student homework grades from first and second quarters for the targeted students. The table is divided between the third and fourth year classes. The students in the third year German class showed little change in homework completion percentages, with an increase of 5% in the number of students at 90% or better, and a decrease of 5% in the number of students at 70-79%. The students in the fourth year German class showed more significant changes. For the first quarter, 76% of the students were completing their homework 90% of the time or better. By second quarter, only 41% were completing their homework 90% of the time or better.

More detrimental was the increase in the number of students completing their homework less than 60% of the time. The 12% earning an F grade for homework at first quarter doubled to 24% at second quarter.

Table 11

Homework Grades

German III	Number of A's	Number of B's	Number of C's	Number of D's	Number of F's
First Quarter	15	6	2	0	0
Second Quarter	16	6	1	0	0
German IV	Number of A's	Number of B's	Number of C's	Number of D's	Number of F's
First Quarter	13	2	0	0	2
Second Quarter	7	3	3	0	4

Table 12 presents student participation grades from first and second quarters for the targeted students. The table is divided between the third and fourth year classes. Similar to the homework percentages, the students of the third year German classes showed an overall increase in participation percentages. Although there occurred a 9% drop in students participating at 90% or better, a 21% increase in the number of students participating at 80-89% took place. Again, in the fourth year German class, decreases were noted, with an 18% drop in the number of students participating at 90% or better, as well as a 6% increase in the number of students participating at 60-69%.

Table 13 presents student assessment grades from first and second quarters for the targeted students. The table is divided between the third and fourth year classes. Changes in grades for assessments were also noted. For the students in the third

year German class, a 9% decrease in the number of students earning A's and C's was noted. These students appeared to have shifted toward the B range, causing a 17% increase in the number of students earning between 80-89%. Students in the fourth year German class saw many more assessment grade shifts. Overall, there was a 6% decrease in the number of students scoring above 80%, but a 50% increase in the number of students scoring below 70%. Although the results for homework, participation, and assessment grades were discouraging, student surveys and anecdotal records yielded favorable outcomes.

Table 12

Participation Grades

German III	Number of A's	Number of B's	Number of C's	Number of D's	Number of F's
First Quarter	14	0	4	1	4
Second Quarter	12	5	3	1	2
German IV	Number of A's	Number of B's	Number of C's	Number of D's	Number of F's
First Quarter	10	2	1	2	2
Second Quarter	7	5	0	3	2

Table 13

Assessment Grades

German III	Number of A's	Number of B's	Number of C's	Number of D's	Number of F's
First Quarter	13	7	3	0	0
Second Quarter	11	11	1	0	0
German IV	Number of A's	Number of B's	Number of C's	Number of D's	Number of F's
First Quarter	7	3	4	2	1
Second Quarter	4	5	2	4	2

Student Surveys and Anecdotal Records

A student survey was administered following second quarter to collect student reactions to the specific teaching methods used (See Appendix J). As an earlier survey had indicated, the students showed strong preference for the Verbal / Linguistic and Logical / Mathematical intelligences. Eighty-six percent agreed that strategies involving Verbal / Linguistic strengths motivated them and/or helped them learn. Eighty-one percent agreed that strategies employing Logical / Mathematical proficiencies motivated them. Interestingly, although they preferred these learning methods, they did not necessarily prefer alternative assessment strategies involving these strengths. Fifty-five percent agreed that they were motivated by interviews and/or partner dialogs as an alternative to paper and pen tests, but 27% were not. Thirty-nine percent were indifferent to the use of Venn-diagrams, word-webs, or other graphic organizers to demonstrate their learning. Sixty-two percent responded unfavorably or with indifference towards activities involving intrapersonal skills, and similarly 58% of the students did not prefer assessments involving portfolio reflection and goal setting. Teaching strategies that the students overwhelmingly favored involved flexibility and leniency. Seventy-eight percent felt that accepting late work helped motivate them, or helped them learn. Ninety-five percent felt motivated by being allowed to re-take any and all tests or quizzes. Interestingly, and perhaps lending insight into the failures of the home-school liaison and contracting phase of the intervention, was the response of students in regards to parental involvement in their learning. Seventy percent responded indifferently or unfavorably to having their

parents involved in what they were learning.

The anecdotal records of the teacher yielded positive feedback from the students for many of the various strategies implemented. Apprehension was noted from many students when projects and writing assignments were announced. The students expressed feelings of being overwhelmed with the number of such assignments given from all of their teachers. Once they saw that time was to be given in class for much of the work, their fears eased. The teacher was able to interact more with individual students during project and writing assignments, and noted more students actively involved with their own projects during this time. The students expressed little confusion when the assignments were broken down into steps, and many produced their most creative and thoughtful work since they began in German. In summary, inferences and suggestions from the researcher follow.

Conclusions and Recommendations

According to homework, participation, and assessment percentages, the interventions were only marginally successful at reducing signs of underachievement. The greatest shift appears to have been made by average or slightly above average students slipping in performance from first to second quarter.

According to the student survey results, the students enjoyed a wide variety of teaching and assessment strategies. They seem to favor a greater assortment of learning activities, but are somewhat less enthusiastic when it comes to various methods of assessment. This could be related to the students' lack of exposure to these methods in the past.

Based on the survey results and the teacher's personal observations throughout the semester, it is the researcher's belief that variety of instruction does positively affect student motivation. Individual contracting and home-school partnerships, although unsuccessful here, are also powerful motivational tools, but can be so powerful, that the methods of implementation and carrying out are critical, and vary for every student. The teacher must consider the personality of the student and the parents when deciding on the frequency of meetings and specific areas of focus for improvement. The attitudes and self-esteem of each member involved should be carefully considered. It is important to realize that the contracts and partnerships also require a great deal of time and responsibility on the part of each member involved.

Upon reflection, the researcher has made several recommendations for improving the success of the individual contracting, and for generating more meaningful data. In regard to individual contracting, it appeared that the labeling effect of the contract was paramount. The fact that it was termed a contract had a deleterious effect by itself. Also, notifying the students and parents that they had been selected, or chosen as showing signs of underachievement seemed to demotivate them. Although the contracting was anonymous and not discussed outside of the parties involved, the students felt put upon, rather than feeling supported. Perhaps if the term 'contract' were not used, and the parents and students were not told they were selected, the labeling effects would not occur. Of course, for research purposes this would not be possible.

To produce more meaningful data, it is the researcher's belief that data should be collected over a full year rather than the half year period used for this study. Student motivation and energy tends to be exceptionally high at the start of a new school year and drops in the middle of the year. A comparison of percentages from the first and second semesters might have yielded a more accurate reflection of the success or failure of the interventions.

Conflicting results between homework, participation, and assessment grades versus student surveys and anecdotal records lend further support to the notion that motivation is affected by a myriad of stimuli. Although students themselves claim to be motivated by certain factors, their actions may indicate otherwise. Or perhaps, it is impossible to pinpoint the effects of single variables on motivation, since they can not be applied in isolation.

The researcher gained many valuable insights throughout the course of this study. As discovered early on, students' personalities are complex and diverse. Methods which motivate one student to shine, can demotivate another. The vacillation of students' motivation can change from day to day, affected by everyday encounters within their lives. Although no single intervention will increase motivation all of the time in all students, variety in teaching strategies, and increased communication between the teacher, student, and parent, provides a learning environment conducive to achievement.

In light of the fact that so many students exhibit signs of underachievement, how can teachers of the United States of America prepare their students for the next

century? By consistently presenting students with challenges, and offering the necessary encouragement, teachers can help to empower their students to capitalize on learning opportunities and achieve their goals. Teachers and their classrooms are important factors in students' motivation. Although they can not be solely responsible for or in control of student achievement, their teaching strategies and relationships with students and parents can provoke significant changes, positively or negatively. Just as America guarantees its citizens the right of freedom and the pursuit of happiness, American teachers should guarantee their students the right of learning and the pursuit of achievement. Whether or not the student accomplishes it, it is essential that teachers do everything within their means to provide for the opportunity.

REFERENCES

Ashton, P., & Webb, R.B. (1986). Making a difference: Teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Bellanca, J. & Fogarty, R. (1991). Blueprints for thinking in the cooperative classroom. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing.

Berliner & Casanova. (1996). Putting research to work in your school. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing.

Berreth, D. & Berman, S. (1997, May). The moral dimensions of schools. Educational Leadership, 55, 24-27.

Blythe, T., Gardner, H., & White, N. (1992). Multiple intelligence theory: Creating the thoughtful classroom. In J. Bellanca, A. Costa, & R. Fogarty (Eds.), If Minds Matter: A Foreword to the Future, 2. Palatine, IL: Skylight Publishing. 127-134.

Bradley, A. (1997, January 22). Standards vs. control. Education Week, 16, 139-142.

Bradley, A. (1997, February 19). Philadelphia assailed for large numbers of 11th grade "no shows" on tests. Education Week, 16, 7.

Burke, K. (1994). The mindful school: How to assess authentic learning. Palatine, IL: Skylight Publishing. xii-xix.

Canter, L., & Canter, M. (1993). How to succeed with difficult students. Santa Monica, CA: Canter & Associates Publishing.

Chapman, C. (1993). If the shoe fits: How to develop multiple intelligence in the classroom. Palatine, IL: Skylight Publishing.

Clark, L. H. & Starr, I. S. (1991). Secondary and middle school teaching methods, 6th ed.. New York: Macmillan Publishing.

Crosby, M. & Howard, D. (1992). Lesson learned in the cooperative college classroom. In J. Bellanca, A. Costa, & R. Fogarty (Eds.), If Minds Matter: A Foreword to the Future, 2. Palatine, IL: Skylight Publishing, 243-250.

Cummings, & Haggerty. (1997). Raising healthy children. Educational Leadership, May, 55, 28-30.

Garbarino, J. (1997, Apr.). Educating children in a socially toxic environment. Educational Leadership, 54. 12-16.

Griffen, R.S. (1988). Underachievers in Secondary School: Education off the Mark. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kallick, B. (1992). Evaluation: A collaborative process. In J. Bellanca, A. Costa, & R. Fogarty (Eds.), If Minds Matter: A Foreword to the Future, 2. Palatine, IL: Skylight Publishing. 313-319.

Levine, D. U. & Ornstein, A. C. (1989). Foundations in education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Manning, L.M., Lucking, R., & MacDonald, R.H. (1995). What walks in urban middle schools. Childhood Education, 71. 221-224.

Midgley, C., & Urdain, T. (1992). The transition to middle level schools. Middle School Journal, 24. 5-14.

Olson, L. (1997, January 22). Keeping tabs on quality. Education Week, 16. 7-17.

Rimm, S. (1995). Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades, and What You Can Do About It. New York: Crown Publishers.

Rimm, S. (1997, Apr.) An underachievement epidemic. Educational Leadership, 54. 18-22.

Rumberger, R. (1995). Dropping out of middle school. American Educational Research Journal, 32 (3), 583-625.

Solomon, D., Watson, M.S., Delucchi, K.L., Schaps, E., & Battistich, V. (1988). Enhancing children's pro social behavior in the classroom. American Educational Research Journal, 25. 527-554.

Wagner, T. (1996, Oct.). Bringing school reform back down to earth. Phi Delta Kappan, 78. 145-149.

APPENDIX A

GERMAN EVALUATION SURVEY

GERMAN EVALUATION

Thank you for your interest and cooperation this past year. I hope you have had a good time while learning more about Germany and its language. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. The feedback that I receive from you is extremely valuable for the program as well as my teaching. I will not look at these until after grades have been turned in-- not that it would matter, but please answer as honestly and thoughtfully as you can. Your sincere comments and suggestions can really help me to improve my teaching. Thank you!

1. Please describe your perception of your progress in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding the German language. Do you feel satisfied with your progress? If not, please describe the weakness. What do you believe could have been done to avoid the situations you've described?

2. Please describe the activities we did in and out of class that helped you learn. Consider all skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking. Consider partner work, small group work, large group work, projects, etc..

3. Which activities did little or nothing for your learning? Consider the aspects from question #2.

4. Which activities were especially fun, while also being helpful? Consider the aspects from question #2.

5. What motivates you to perform well, or perform at all? Consider things like: grades, approval, learning itself, rewards, recognition, etc..

6. Please respond to the following, adding comments wherever you would like:

   a. Did you feel that your teacher cared about your academic progress?

   b. Did you feel that your teacher cared about your personal welfare?

   c. Did you feel that instruction was clear?

   d. Did you feel that you were well informed of your progress?

7. What suggestions would you make to improve the curriculum, the instruction, and your teacher's effectiveness?

8. What special interests do you have or would like to learn about next year in German?

Vielen Dank für deine Ideen und Meinungen!
Tschüs bis nächstes Jahr -- Schöne Ferien!

APPENDIX B

STUDENT WORK SURVEY

STUDENT WORK SURVEY

Please respond to the following questions as completely as you can. Answer as honestly as you can, there are no right or wrong answers.

1. Which of your parents/guardians work? Full- /part-time?

2. What time do your parents/guardians usually come home from work? Also, please indicate if your parents/guardians work on weekends.

3. What after/before school activities do you participate in?

   What is your typical weekly time schedule for these activities?

	Sun.	**Mon.**	**Tue.**	**Wed.**	**Thr.**	**Fri.**	**Sat.**
# hrs:							

4. Do you work? _____ If so, what is your typical weekly time schedule?

	Sun.	**Mon.**	**Tue.**	**Wed.**	**Thr.**	**Fri.**	**Sat.**
# hrs:							

6. Why do you, or don't you have a job (I'm <u>not</u> judging, I'm interested in your reasons)?

   Are these <u>your</u> reasons, or your parents reasons, or a combination of both?

7. What do you do with your money that you earn (spend it on clothes, music, food, etc.; or save it for __?__)?

8. Please describe, in as much detail as possible, the relationship of your parents to your homework and/or studying.
   Do they help you? How?

   Do they ask to see it?

   Do they ask if you have any, or have done it?

   Other:

9. What are your parents' attitudes towards school and learning? Do they support the values of:
   a. good grades?

   b. regular attendance?

   c. hard work?

   d. good study habits?

   e. higher education (college, masters degree, doctorate)?

   f. respect for authority?

   g. learning for the sake of learning?

10. What type of students were (are - if they're still attending school) your parents? (good/poor students, dropped out, went to college, motivated, hated/loved school, etc.)

11. What, if any, household responsibilities do you assume? How often? For example: cleaning, cooking, yard work, babysitting, etc..

12. For question #11, is your responsibility part of a chore/allowance system, or is it to help parents while they are away at work, or both?

APPENDIX C

PARENT LETTER OF EXPLANATION

September 15, 1997

Dear Parents,

I am working toward the completion of my Master of Arts degree in Education through St. Xavier University. My classes will be involved this year in a program to reverse student underachievement through an increase in the variety of teaching methods and some targeted individual contracting. Some data will be collected (from homework percentages, participation percentages, assessments, and student surveys), but all participants will be anonymous. Some classroom activities (especially group projects) will be video-taped in an effort to better evaluate their effectiveness.

This will be part of my regular classroom experience. It will in no way have a negative effect on student grades, but rather, I hope, it will have a positive one. I fully expect this program to enrich the curriculum and enhance student learning and motivation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at school at: (847)395-1421.

Sincerely,

Mrs. MaryAnn Clooney

APPENDIX D

STUDENT INTEREST SURVEY

Name_____

STUDENT INTEREST SURVEY

Please respond to the following questions by choosing the response that best describes your feelings and mark the appropriate space onto your scantron. Answer as honestly as you can, there are no right or wrong answers.

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Partly Agree-Partly Disagree
D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree

1. I like to come to German class.
2. I hope to / plan on using what I learn in German later on in a career.
3. I hope to / plan on using what I learn in German later for my own personal interest.
4. I feel successful when doing German listening activities.
5. I feel successful when doing German speaking activities.
6. I feel successful when doing German reading activities.
7. I feel successful when doing German writing activities.
8. I find learning German vocabulary easy.
9. I find learning German grammar easy.
10. I find the homework (Arbeitsheft) easy.
11. I do my homework on a regular basis (almost always).
12. I do my homework well on a regular basis.
13. I like contributing (participating) in class.
14. I participate often (at least once/twice per day) in class.
15. My overall grade in this class is as high (or higher than) as I am capable of.

For #s 16-18 choose **3** of the following activities which help you learn best.

A. Role-play skits, using props, out-of-seat activities
B. Writing essays or journals, silent reading
C. Learning songs/lyrics, singing
D. Using graphic organizers or mnemonic devices
E. Use of overheads, word-webs, sketches for skits
AB. Personal journals, surveys, independent work
AC. Partner/group work, group projects, games

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE LESSON PLAN

LESSON NAME: Role-play / Skit
TARGETED INTELLIGENCE: Verbal / Linguistic
SUPPORTING INTELLIGENCES: Interpersonal; Bodily/Kinesthetic; Visual /Spatial
THINKING SKILLS: Reviewing Prior Skills; Generating Ideas; Problem Solving
SOCIAL SKILLS: Listening, Encouraging
CONTENT FOCUS: Conversations at a Meal (breakfast/lunch/dinner)
MATERIALS: Paper, pen, text (possibly - props, music, poster paper, markers)
TASK FOCUS: Students will review material and/or skills learned in a unit. Students will use target language in roll-play setting (to further internalize learning).
PRODUCT: Skit, writing assignment (possibly - drawings, videos)
PROBLEM: Working within a time constraint and accomplishing all objectives; Providing an alternative activity for students who are absent.
ACTIVITY:
- Teacher gives objectives on overhead / hand-out
- Teacher models an example of expectations
- Teacher points out where students can find information in text
- Teacher identifies social skill to be focused on
- Teacher provides rubric for evaluation
- Students are put into groups of 3-4
- Students all get out paper and begin working in groups
- Teacher debriefs class with collected data on social skills
- Groups volunteer or are chosen to perform skit
- Homework: Students write up dialog to be later placed into their portfolio.

REFLECTIONS:
1. How well did the rest of your group contribute to creating the skit?
2. How well did you contribute to creating the skit?
3. How did performing the skit help you to learning the material?
4. How did seeing the other skits help you to learn the material?

Group Skit: Conversation at the Breakfast Table

- ask how each other slept
- talk about what each person would like for breakfast
- offer various breakfast items
- ask whether or not they have ever tried a particular item
- ask for something to be passed
- make sure to talk about what you're having with each item (coffee w/ sugar, toast w/ butter)
- talk about how things taste
- include in your dialog a **conflict** of any kind that is quickly **resolved**
- **be polite!!!!!!**
- use at least **5** of the following vocabulary terms and/or phrases:

orange juice cereal eggs coffee bacon sugar cream sleep pancakes syrup newspaper bathrobe slippers tired salt/pepper hot/cold How's it taste? delicious runny soggy

Group Skit: Conversation at the Lunch Table

- ask whether or not they have tried various items
- offer various items and ask what each other would like on their sandwich
- talk about how things taste
- ask to have something passed
- ask for more of / another of something - respond by saying it's all gone
- choose something else
- include in your dialog a **conflict** of any kind that is quickly **resolved**
- **be polite!!!!!!**
- use at least **5** of the following vocabulary terms and/or phrases:

sandwich napkin turkey ham roast beef milk pop/soda How's it taste? hot/cold chips mustard ketchup mayonnaise please pass the.... pretzels cookies lunch box

Group Skit: Conversation at the Dinner Table

- ask what's for dinner
- say that it smells good
- ask about and say how things taste
- ask to have something passed
- ask for more of / another of something - respond by saying it's all gone
- choose something else
- include in your dialog a **conflict** of any kind that is quickly **resolved**
- **be polite!!!!!!**
- use at least **5** of the following vocabulary terms and/or phrases:

How's it taste? hot/cold soup diet steak peas carrots salt/pepper napkin milk wine pizza chicken rice noodles potatoes

Evaluation Rubric for Role-play Skit

*You will each be graded based on the following rubric:

Name_____

Score_____

	1	2	3	4
Pronunciation	native language interference make language barely intelligible	native language interference makes words difficult to understand	native language interference is noticeable	native language interference is only somewhat noticeable
Accuracy	errors make communication barely intelligible	major errors, little sentence structure	minor errors; few major errors - do not hinder communication	few minor errors - do not hinder communication
Vocabulary	inadequate or inappropriate vocabulary	limited vocabulary that weakens main ideas	adequate vocabulary with correct useage	excellent range of vocabulary; precise useage
Content	sparse content & undeveloped ideas; main ideas unclear	sparse content or undeveloped ideas; main ideas at times unclear	adequate content; developed to convey main ideas	solid content; well developed, clear, interesting ideas
Oral Presentation	difficult to hear; read paper ; noticeably unprepared	heavily dependent upon notes; preparation is questionable	somewhat dependent upon notes; somewhat uncomfortable delivery	adequate volume, good eye contact; comfortable delivery

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE COOPERATIVE LEARNING LESSON PLAN

LESSON NAME: Roll-play / Skit
THINKING SKILLS: Reviewing Prior Skills; Generating Ideas; Problem Solving
SOCIAL SKILLS: Listening, Encouraging
CONTENT FOCUS: Depends upon Unit of Study - Thematic
MATERIALS: Paper, pen, text (possibly - props, music, poster paper, markers)
TASK FOCUS: Students will review material and/or skills learned in a unit. Students will use target language in roll-play setting (to further internalize learning).
PRODUCT: Skit, writing assignment (possibly - drawings, videos)
PROBLEM: Working within a time constraint and accomplishing all objectives. Providing an alternative activity for students who are absent.
ACTIVITY:
- Teacher gives objectives on overhead / hand-out
- Teacher models an example of expectations
- Teacher points out where students can find information in text
- Teacher identifies social skill to be focused on
- Teacher provides rubric for evaluation
- Students are put into groups of 3-5
- Students all get out paper and begin working in groups
- Students evaluate each other on contributions to assignment
- Teacher debriefs class with collected data on social skills
- Groups volunteer or are chosen to perform skit
- Homework: Students write up dialog to be later placed into their portfolio

REFLECTIONS: I have used this activity many times. At times it has been very successful, while at other times quite unsuccessful. If I have rushed the students through the directions or not somewhere provided my objectives in writing, I most often end up disappointed with the results (big surprise!). Providing the students with a rubric for evaluation has thus far (I have only used it twice yet) proven to produce better results. The students also seem to be more sure of themselves and take the activity more seriously. They are aware of the importance this activity will have on their grade. I also like how this activity helps the weaker students with the writing process. They are able to go home with at least a good sketch and their writing samples have been far superior than last year's samples. It has also made my grading process much less cumbersome, since the writing samples have already gone through a few editing stages (without the students even being aware of it!).

Build in High Order Thinking:

- Human Graph - For this particular activity, the students were grouped by being placed into a Human Graph. They chose their place based upon their height (shortest to tallest), and then I counted off to form groups of three to four students. Although this application does not build higher order thinking, they are often grouped by this method being posed with a question relating to the topic.
- Application - The main focus/purpose of this activity is for the students to apply all that they have learned to a meaningful situation. By roll-playing, they can use their new skills and information in a "real setting," and internalize their learning.
- Decision Making - The students have to reach a consensus on how to play out their skit within the given objectives. Depending upon the theme they have studied, they have to decide such things as: where to go; what to buy; who plays what roll; when to go; what is the setting/mood, etc..

Unite Teams:

- Shared Materials - Depending upon the unit of study, each group will need a variety of materials to fulfill the objectives to complete this activity (poster-paper, markers, scissors, glue, props, etc.). Generally, the props personalize the skit for each group. It gives the members shared responsibility not only for the academic portions of the assignment, but for making the skit "come alive."
- Group Grade - At times, I will have each member grade one another on their effort and/or contribution to the skit, as well as how often they spoke German during the preparation of the skit. I also have each member grade him-/herself based on the same criteria.

Insure Individual Learning:

- Assigned Roles - Each student must play a significant part within the skit. Sometimes I will also have the students choose particular roles to carry out while preparing the skit (materials manager, encourager, time manager, grade recorder, etc.).
- Individual Application and Homework - Each student must write out the entire skit during class, and rewrite (and possibly modify) at home for a writing assignment.
- Test - This activity is usually a culmination of a unit's skills and information. The skit insures that each student cover all pertinent information that will be tested.
- Individual Grades - Each student receives his/her own grade for the skit. Some areas (especially content) within the grading rubric will be given the same grade for all group members. Others (pronunciation and oral

presentation) will be graded on an individual basis.

Look Over and Discuss:

- P.M.I. - All skits are video taped so that the students can watch them at a later date. Each class will watch 2 or 3 skits and respond by providing feedback about what they liked, felt could be improved, or found interesting.
- Teacher Observation Sheet - As the students are preparing their skits with their group, the teacher circulates watching for on-task behavior and signs of encouragement.

Develop Social Skills:

- Clip-board Cruising - Teacher circulates to monitor positive/negative social skills within groups.
- Reaching a Consensus - Students must agree to the particulars of the skit (they are given the option of changing any/all of the particulars within their written homework assignment).
- Encouraging Others - The teacher reviews with the class appropriate phrases (in German) for encouraging others before beginning preparation of the skit.

.....

Plus:

- Variety of Activities (writing, drawing, role-playing, discussing, etc.).
- Individual Learning (written assignment, performing, speaking, accountability).
- All Students Active Throughout Entire Activity

Minus:

- What to Do About Absences?
- Individual Behavior Problems - Can really throw off group and whether or not they are able to complete the objectives.

Interesting:

- Skits/Roll-Playing - Can be video taped for teacher and students to watch

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT LESSON PLAN

Wir, die Jugend * Kapitel 5 Projekt

Poster

Design a clothing ad for a magazine. Make sure to cover the following objectives:

- Describe and have pictures for at least **5 items of clothing**
- Mention the **fabric content**
- Mention the available **colors**
- Mention the available **sizes**
- Mention the **versatility** of the outfit (for spring and/or summer, for work / school, etc....)
- Mention the **price**
- Use at least **10 adjectives** (**5 w/ endings** - before nouns, 5 can be w/out)

Your poster will be graded for its **content, appearance,** and **mechanics.**

Radio Announcement

Design a radio announcement to be performed in class, or taped onto a cassette for grading. You may use the information from your group's poster (WARNING: If you wait until the day you perform, to become familiar with the material, your grade will suffer).

- Describe and have pictures for at least **5 items of clothing**
- Mention the **fabric content**
- Mention the available **colors**
- Mention the available **sizes**
- Mention the **versatility** of the outfit (for spring and/or summer, for work / school, etc....)
- Mention the **price**
- Use at least **10 adjectives** (**5 w/ endings** - before nouns, 5 can be w/out)

Your radio announcement will be graded for its **content, performance,** and **mechanics.** You will also need to turn in a **written script.**

Skit

Construct a dialog that takes place in a store. You will perform this skit in front of the class, or you will need to turn in a video tape of the performance (w/ script). You **may not use scripts** while performing! You must **use props** and make the skit as real-life as possible. Discuss the following points with a salesperson (use Formal - Sie).

- Discuss how you like the item (use **gefallen**)
- Discuss what your **size** is
- Suggest or ask to try the item on (use **anprobieren**)
- Discuss how the item looks on you (use **stehen**)
- Discuss how the item fits you (use **passen**)
- The salesperson urges you to buy the item buy pointing out either:
  - the versatility of the item (for spring/summer, for school/work)
  - the fabric content
  - the price (on sale, inexpensive, etc.)

Your skit will be graded for **content, performance,** and **mechanics.** You will need to turn in a **written script**, although you may not use it while performing.

Wir, die Jugend • Projekt - Auswertung (evaluation) Schüler/in_____

Ratings:
+ = Frequently / Good
√ = Sometimes / OK
ø = Not much / Poor

Group member:	_____	_____	_____
• Uses class time well	_____	_____	_____
• Works well w/ others	_____	_____	_____
• Does quality work	_____	_____	_____
• Contributes to project	_____	_____	_____
Group member:	_____	_____	_____
• Uses class time well	_____	_____	_____
• Works well w/ others	_____	_____	_____
• Does quality work	_____	_____	_____
• Contributes to project	_____	_____	_____

What I found **frustrating** with this project was....

What I **liked** or **found helpful** with this project was....

What I **learned** during this project was....

Wir, die Jugend • Kapitel 5 Projekt- Auswertung Schüler_____

Poster (Reklame)

	1	2	3
Inhalt	2 or fewer pictures limited vocabulary objectives not met	3 or 4 pictures adequate vocabulary objectives almost met	5 or more pictures wide range of vocabulary meets objectives
Grammatik	many spelling errors many grammat. errors	few spelling errors solid grammar	very few / no spelling errors excellent grammar
Aussehen	sloppy / crooked pencil basic unbalanced/uneven	neat pen somewhat interesting straight lettering & balanced	eye-catching markers or other medium creative / original & colorful excellent use of space

Radioreklame

	1	2	3
Inhalt	2 or fewer items limited vocabulary objectives not met	3 or 4 items adequate vocabulary objectives almost met	5 or more items wide range of vocabulary meets objectives
Grammatik	weak pronunciation weak grammar	good pronunciation solid grammar	excellent pronunciation excellent grammar
Leistung	flat / monotone choppy speaking difficult to understand	adequate voice occasional breaks understandable	energetic voice fluid speaking easy to follow / hear

Skizze

	1	2	3
Inhalt	did not use props limited vocabulary objectives not met	used clothing props adequate vocabulary objectives almost met	used clothing & setting props wide range of vocabulary meets objectives
Grammatik	weak pronunciation weak grammar	good pronunciation solid grammar	excellent pronunciation excellent grammar
Leistung	flat / monotone difficult to understand just stood & talked	adequate voice understandable believable dialog	energetic / real-life voice easy to follow / hear performance real-life

APPENDIX H

ACHIEVEMENT CONTRACT

ACHIEVEMENT CONTRACT
FOR: _____ IN GERMAN _____

This contract outlines specific strategies for supplementing the regular German ____ curriculum in an effort to provide additional support for _____. Its purpose is to serve as a tangible reminder for using specific learning strategies. The following should serve as goals that the student is expected to implement into his/her regular weekly study regimen.

EXPECTATIONS:

- Bring **progress report** (obtained in guidance office) to Mrs. Clooney for completion, and home to parents (information re.: homework, attention, upcoming tests and quizzes, and assessment grades). Every Thursday/Friday.

- Bring (2? - one for learning center) **blank tape cassette** for dubbing of textbook and workbook selections. New tapes (or tape over old tape) needed for each unit (sometimes 2 chapters will fit on 1 tape).

  - Listen to tape w/out textbook 1 x / week.
  - Listen to tape with textbook 1 x / week (read along).
  - Listen to tape with textbook, stopping after every sentence to repeat aloud 1 x / week (sometimes try doing this w/out reading along).

- Have someone **read aloud / dictate** to you from "A1" or "B1" selection. **Write down** what they are saying as you hear it. Have them repeat sentences as necessary. 5 - 10 sentences (approx. 50 words) is a good target. Then go back and **check your spelling** errors. 1- 2 x / week.

- Meet with Mrs. Clooney for **tutoring 1x / week**. This is strictly for working on German.

- Meet with Mrs. Clooney 1 x every other week (2x / month) to work on goal setting, organizational skills, and to assess how you are progressing. "**Contract meeting.**"

- Have **parents complete progress report** re.: study habits, organizational skills, and general observations of child's learning at home. _____ is to **bring this to** Mrs. Clooney 1 x every other week (**2x / month**) to the "**contract meeting**."

- _____ teaches one or both of his parents a small **German lesson** 1 x / month. Student and teacher decide what the lesson will be.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS:

- Have _____ help sibling with his German homework and/or studying.
- Encourage _____ and sibling to do their German homework at the same time.
- Encourage _____ to read from German magazines pertaining to his interests (Ann's Bavariahaus and Koenemann's sell a variety).
- Set aside regular study time each weekday and some on weekends.
- Make sure study area is quiet, orderly w/ necessary supplies, and free of distractions.
- Encourage _____ to listen to German music pertaining to his interests (he may borrow some of the school's tapes).
- Participate voluntarily at least once each day in class (when participation is part of the lesson).

I have read the guidelines and suggestions above, and understand that I am to do my best to fulfill each guideline. I realize that this is not a punishment, but will only help me / my child / my student to improve.

_____

(signature of student) (date)

_____

(signature of parent) (date)

_____

(signature of teacher) (date)

APPENDIX I

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT

Antioch Community High School Guidance Department 395-1421

Current Progress Report on _____, class of _____, for the week of _____.
Forms are available in the Guidance Office. Have each teacher complete information. Take home to parents.

Subject: _____ Date: _____ Has student done assigned homework? _____ Quality of homework? _____ Has student been attentive in class? _____ Any test grades? _____ Comments or tests or assignments coming soon? _____ _____ Work to be made up _____ Teacher signature _____	Subject: _____ Date: _____ Has student done assigned homework? _____ Quality of homework? _____ Has student been attentive in class? _____ Any test grades? _____ Comments or tests or assignments coming soon? _____ _____ Work to be made up: _____ Teacher signature _____
Subject _____ Date: _____ Has student done assigned homework? _____ Quality of homework? _____ Has student been attentive in class? _____ Any test grades? _____ Comments or tests or assignments coming soon? _____ _____ Work to be made up _____ Teacher signature _____	Subject: _____ Date: _____ Has student done assigned homework? _____ Quality of homework? _____ Has student been attentive in class? _____ Any test grades? _____ Comments or tests or assignments coming soon? _____ _____ Work to be made up: _____ Teacher signature _____
Subject _____ Date _____ Has student done assigned homework? _____ Quality of homework? _____ Has student been attentive in class? _____ Any test grades? _____ Comments or tests or assignments coming soon? _____ _____ Work to be made up _____ Teacher signature _____	Subject _____ Date: _____ Has student done assigned homework? _____ Quality of homework? _____ Has student been attentive in class? _____ Any test grades? _____ Comments or tests or assignments coming soon? _____ _____ Work to be made up: _____ Teacher signature _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX J

STUDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY

STUDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY

For the following items, please answer in regard to how well the teaching strategy helped you to maintain interest and motivation. The degree to which the strategy helped you learn/understand can also be considered since this also affects your desire to learn.

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Partly Agree-Partly Disagree
D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree

1. Strategies employing the use of: •computers •magazines •tape recorders •display of work •dramatic reading •games •variety of methods •mnemonic devices •partner and/or group work •graphic organizers (word webs, Venn-diagrams, RESE-NESE-MRMN chart, etc.) •comic books

2. Strategies employing the use of: •poems •music mnemonics •recite choral reading •music and songs •background noise and music

3. Strategies employing the use of: •puzzles •games •patterns and their relationships •research •categorizing •analogies •outlines •Venn diagrams •computers •mnemonics

4. Strategies employing the use of: •analogies •posters, charts, graphics and pictures •illustrations and sketches •props •use of overhead and board •active imagination

5. Strategies employing the use of: •field trips •role playing & charades •games •props or actual products •partner and group work •interviews

6. Strategies employing the use of: •goal setting •journals •thinking about how you learn •silent reading •reflection •visualization

7. Strategies employing the use of: •videos •textbook •software, INTERNET •jigsaw (dividing up learning task into expert groups and then reporting back to a base group what you learned) •wraparounds (one by one offering feedback or an example) •partner & group work •creative tasks •graphic organizers

8. Having different seating plans and partners throughout the year.

9. Having student assistants review homework, pass out papers, Geld, and folders.

10. Evaluating the participation of group members.

11. Providing and receiving peer feedback for writing and/or performance (roll-play) assessments. ("I liked how you.....a suggestion I have is.....")

12. Accepting late work.

13. Allowing you to re-take any and all tests or quizzes.

---OVER---

14. Receiving tokens (Geld) for participation.
15. Collecting your work in portfolios and periodically reflecting on it.
16. Role-play skits as an alternative to paper and pen tests.
17. Projects as an alternative to paper and pen tests.
18. Interviews and/or partner dialogs as an alternative to paper and pen tests.
19. The use of Venn-diagrams, word-webs, or other graphic organizers to demonstrate your learning.
20. Parental involvement in your learning, either through teacher contact, school contact, or between just you and your parent.
21. Availability of weekly lesson plans.

Once again, thank you so much for taking the time to answer this survey!